

1 AN ACT concerning taxes.

2 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
3 represented in the General Assembly:

4 Section 5. The Property Tax Code is amended by changing
5 Section 15-172 as follows:

6 (35 ILCS 200/15-172)

7 Sec. 15-172. Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead
8 Exemption.

9 (a) This Section may be cited as the Senior Citizens
10 Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.

11 (b) As used in this Section:

12 "Applicant" means an individual who has filed an
13 application under this Section.

14 "Base amount" means the base year equalized assessed
15 value of the residence plus the first year's equalized
16 assessed value of any added improvements which increased the
17 assessed value of the residence after the base year.

18 "Base year" means the taxable year prior to the taxable
19 year for which the applicant first qualifies and applies for
20 the exemption provided that in the prior taxable year the
21 property was improved with a permanent structure that was
22 occupied as a residence by the applicant who was liable for
23 paying real property taxes on the property and who was either
24 (i) an owner of record of the property or had legal or
25 equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written
26 instrument or (ii) had a legal or equitable interest as a
27 lessee in the parcel of property that was single family
28 residence. If in any subsequent taxable year for which the
29 applicant applies and qualifies for the exemption the
30 equalized assessed value of the residence is less than the
31 equalized assessed value in the existing base year (provided

1 that such equalized assessed value is not based on an
2 assessed value that results from a temporary irregularity in
3 the property that reduces the assessed value for one or more
4 taxable years), then that subsequent taxable year shall
5 become the base year until a new base year is established
6 under the terms of this paragraph. For taxable year 1999
7 only, the Chief County Assessment Officer shall review (i)
8 all taxable years for which the applicant applied and
9 qualified for the exemption and (ii) the existing base year.
10 The assessment officer shall select as the new base year the
11 year with the lowest equalized assessed value. An equalized
12 assessed value that is based on an assessed value that
13 results from a temporary irregularity in the property that
14 reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years
15 shall not be considered the lowest equalized assessed value.
16 The selected year shall be the base year for taxable year
17 1999 and thereafter until a new base year is established
18 under the terms of this paragraph.

19 "Chief County Assessment Officer" means the County
20 Assessor or Supervisor of Assessments of the county in which
21 the property is located.

22 "Equalized assessed value" means the assessed value as
23 equalized by the Illinois Department of Revenue.

24 "Household" means the applicant, the spouse of the
25 applicant, and all persons using the residence of the
26 applicant as their principal place of residence.

27 "Household income" means the combined income of the
28 members of a household for the calendar year preceding the
29 taxable year.

30 "Income" has the same meaning as provided in Section 3.07
31 of the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax
32 Relief and Pharmaceutical Assistance Act, except that,
33 beginning in assessment year 2001, "income" does not include
34 veteran's benefits.

1 "Internal Revenue Code of 1986" means the United States
2 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or any successor law or laws
3 relating to federal income taxes in effect for the year
4 preceding the taxable year.

5 "Life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative"
6 means a facility as defined in Section 2 of the Life Care
7 Facilities Act.

8 "Residence" means the principal dwelling place and
9 appurtenant structures used for residential purposes in this
10 State occupied on January 1 of the taxable year by a
11 household and so much of the surrounding land, constituting
12 the parcel upon which the dwelling place is situated, as is
13 used for residential purposes. If the Chief County Assessment
14 Officer has established a specific legal description for a
15 portion of property constituting the residence, then that
16 portion of property shall be deemed the residence for the
17 purposes of this Section.

18 "Taxable year" means the calendar year during which ad
19 valorem property taxes payable in the next succeeding year
20 are levied.

21 (c) Beginning in taxable year 1994, a senior citizens
22 assessment freeze homestead exemption is granted for real
23 property that is improved with a permanent structure that is
24 occupied as a residence by an applicant who (i) is 65 years
25 of age or older during the taxable year, (ii) has a household
26 income of \$35,000 or less prior to taxable year 1999, ~~or~~
27 \$40,000 or less in taxable years year 1999 and 2000, and
28 \$50,000 or less in taxable year 2001 and thereafter, subject
29 to adjustment, (iii) is liable for paying real property taxes
30 on the property, and (iv) is an owner of record of the
31 property or has a legal or equitable interest in the property
32 as evidenced by a written instrument. This homestead
33 exemption shall also apply to a leasehold interest in a
34 parcel of property improved with a permanent structure that

1 is a single family residence that is occupied as a residence
2 by a person who (i) is 65 years of age or older during the
3 taxable year, (ii) has a household income of \$35,000 or less
4 prior to taxable year 1999, ~~or~~ \$40,000 or less in taxable
5 years year 1999 and 2000, and \$50,000 or less in taxable year
6 2001 and thereafter, subject to adjustment, (iii) has a legal
7 or equitable ownership interest in the property as lessee,
8 and (iv) is liable for the payment of real property taxes on
9 that property. Beginning in taxable year 2002, the amount of
10 the household income of the applicant shall be subject to
11 annual adjustments equal to the percentage of increase in the
12 previous calendar year in the Consumer Price Index for All
13 Urban Consumers for all items published by the federal
14 Department of Labor or its successor agency. If this index
15 ceases to be published, the Department of Revenue shall use a
16 comparable substitute index.

17 The amount of this exemption shall be the equalized
18 assessed value of the residence in the taxable year for which
19 application is made minus the base amount.

20 When the applicant is a surviving spouse of an applicant
21 for a prior year for the same residence for which an
22 exemption under this Section has been granted, the base year
23 and base amount for that residence are the same as for the
24 applicant for the prior year.

25 Each year at the time the assessment books are certified
26 to the County Clerk, the Board of Review or Board of Appeals
27 shall give to the County Clerk a list of the assessed values
28 of improvements on each parcel qualifying for this exemption
29 that were added after the base year for this parcel and that
30 increased the assessed value of the property.

31 In the case of land improved with an apartment building
32 owned and operated as a cooperative or a building that is a
33 life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative, the
34 maximum reduction from the equalized assessed value of the

1 property is limited to the sum of the reductions calculated
2 for each unit occupied as a residence by a person or persons
3 (i) 65 years of age or older (ii) with a household income of
4 \$35,000 or less prior to taxable year 1999, or \$40,000 or
5 less in taxable years year 1999 and 2000, and \$50,000 or less
6 in taxable year 2001 and thereafter, subject to adjustment,
7 (iii) who is liable, by contract with the owner or owners of
8 record, for paying real property taxes on the property, and
9 (iv) who is an owner of record of a legal or equitable
10 interest in the cooperative apartment building, other than a
11 leasehold interest. Beginning in taxable year 2002, the
12 amount of the household income of the applicant shall be
13 subject to annual adjustments equal to the percentage of
14 increase in the previous calendar year in the Consumer Price
15 Index for All Urban Consumers for all items published by the
16 federal Department of Labor or its successor agency. If this
17 index ceases to be published, the Department of Revenue shall
18 use a comparable substitute index. In the instance of a
19 cooperative where a homestead exemption has been granted
20 under this Section, the cooperative association or its
21 management firm shall credit the savings resulting from that
22 exemption only to the apportioned tax liability of the owner
23 who qualified for the exemption. Any person who willfully
24 refuses to credit that savings to an owner who qualifies for
25 the exemption is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

26 When a homestead exemption has been granted under this
27 Section and an applicant then becomes a resident of a
28 facility licensed under the Nursing Home Care Act, the
29 exemption shall be granted in subsequent years so long as the
30 residence (i) continues to be occupied by the qualified
31 applicant's spouse or (ii) if remaining unoccupied, is still
32 owned by the qualified applicant for the homestead exemption.

33 Beginning January 1, 1997, when an individual dies who
34 would have qualified for an exemption under this Section, and

1 the surviving spouse does not independently qualify for this
2 exemption because of age, the exemption under this Section
3 shall be granted to the surviving spouse for the taxable year
4 preceding and the taxable year of the death, provided that,
5 except for age, the surviving spouse meets all other
6 qualifications for the granting of this exemption for those
7 years.

8 When married persons maintain separate residences, the
9 exemption provided for in this Section may be claimed by only
10 one of such persons and for only one residence.

11 For taxable year 1994 only, in counties having less than
12 3,000,000 inhabitants, to receive the exemption, a person
13 shall submit an application by February 15, 1995 to the Chief
14 County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property
15 is located. In counties having 3,000,000 or more
16 inhabitants, for taxable year 1994 and all subsequent taxable
17 years, to receive the exemption, a person may submit an
18 application to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the
19 county in which the property is located during such period as
20 may be specified by the Chief County Assessment Officer. The
21 Chief County Assessment Officer in counties of 3,000,000 or
22 more inhabitants shall annually give notice of the
23 application period by mail or by publication. In counties
24 having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, beginning with
25 taxable year 1995 and thereafter, to receive the exemption, a
26 person shall submit an application by July 1 of each taxable
27 year to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in
28 which the property is located. A county may, by ordinance,
29 establish a date for submission of applications that is
30 different than July 1. The applicant shall submit with the
31 application an affidavit of the applicant's total household
32 income, age, marital status (and if married the name and
33 address of the applicant's spouse, if known), and principal
34 dwelling place of members of the household on January 1 of

1 the taxable year. The Department shall establish, by rule, a
2 method for verifying the accuracy of affidavits filed by
3 applicants under this Section. The applications shall be
4 clearly marked as applications for the Senior Citizens
5 Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.

6 Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, in
7 counties having fewer than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an
8 applicant fails to file the application required by this
9 Section in a timely manner and this failure to file is due to
10 a mental or physical condition sufficiently severe so as to
11 render the applicant incapable of filing the application in a
12 timely manner, the Chief County Assessment Officer may extend
13 the filing deadline for a period of 30 days after the
14 applicant regains the capability to file the application, but
15 in no case may the filing deadline be extended beyond 3
16 months of the original filing deadline. In order to receive
17 the extension provided in this paragraph, the applicant shall
18 provide the Chief County Assessment Officer with a signed
19 statement from the applicant's physician stating the nature
20 and extent of the condition, that, in the physician's
21 opinion, the condition was so severe that it rendered the
22 applicant incapable of filing the application in a timely
23 manner, and the date on which the applicant regained the
24 capability to file the application.

25 Beginning January 1, 1998, notwithstanding any other
26 provision to the contrary, in counties having fewer than
27 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an applicant fails to file the
28 application required by this Section in a timely manner and
29 this failure to file is due to a mental or physical condition
30 sufficiently severe so as to render the applicant incapable
31 of filing the application in a timely manner, the Chief
32 County Assessment Officer may extend the filing deadline for
33 a period of 3 months. In order to receive the extension
34 provided in this paragraph, the applicant shall provide the

1 Chief County Assessment Officer with a signed statement from
2 the applicant's physician stating the nature and extent of
3 the condition, and that, in the physician's opinion, the
4 condition was so severe that it rendered the applicant
5 incapable of filing the application in a timely manner.

6 In counties having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an
7 applicant was denied an exemption in taxable year 1994 and
8 the denial occurred due to an error on the part of an
9 assessment official, or his or her agent or employee, then
10 beginning in taxable year 1997 the applicant's base year, for
11 purposes of determining the amount of the exemption, shall be
12 1993 rather than 1994. In addition, in taxable year 1997, the
13 applicant's exemption shall also include an amount equal to
14 (i) the amount of any exemption denied to the applicant in
15 taxable year 1995 as a result of using 1994, rather than
16 1993, as the base year, (ii) the amount of any exemption
17 denied to the applicant in taxable year 1996 as a result of
18 using 1994, rather than 1993, as the base year, and (iii) the
19 amount of the exemption erroneously denied for taxable year
20 1994.

21 For purposes of this Section, a person who will be 65
22 years of age during the current taxable year shall be
23 eligible to apply for the homestead exemption during that
24 taxable year. Application shall be made during the
25 application period in effect for the county of his or her
26 residence.

27 The Chief County Assessment Officer may determine the
28 eligibility of a life care facility that qualifies as a
29 cooperative to receive the benefits provided by this Section
30 by use of an affidavit, application, visual inspection,
31 questionnaire, or other reasonable method in order to insure
32 that the tax savings resulting from the exemption are
33 credited by the management firm to the apportioned tax
34 liability of each qualifying resident. The Chief County

1 Assessment Officer may request reasonable proof that the
2 management firm has so credited that exemption.

3 Except as provided in this Section, all information
4 received by the chief county assessment officer or the
5 Department from applications filed under this Section, or
6 from any investigation conducted under the provisions of this
7 Section, shall be confidential, except for official purposes
8 or pursuant to official procedures for collection of any
9 State or local tax or enforcement of any civil or criminal
10 penalty or sanction imposed by this Act or by any statute or
11 ordinance imposing a State or local tax. Any person who
12 divulges any such information in any manner, except in
13 accordance with a proper judicial order, is guilty of a Class
14 A misdemeanor.

15 Nothing contained in this Section shall prevent the
16 Director or chief county assessment officer from publishing
17 or making available reasonable statistics concerning the
18 operation of the exemption contained in this Section in which
19 the contents of claims are grouped into aggregates in such a
20 way that information contained in any individual claim shall
21 not be disclosed.

22 (d) Each Chief County Assessment Officer shall annually
23 publish a notice of availability of the exemption provided
24 under this Section. The notice shall be published at least
25 60 days but no more than 75 days prior to the date on which
26 the application must be submitted to the Chief County
27 Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is
28 located. The notice shall appear in a newspaper of general
29 circulation in the county.

30 (e) Notwithstanding Sections 6 and 8 of the State
31 Mandates Act, no reimbursement by the State is required for
32 the implementation of any mandate created by this Section.

33 (Source: P.A. 90-14, eff. 7-1-97; 90-204, eff. 7-25-97;
34 90-523, eff. 11-13-97; 90-524, eff. 1-1-98; 90-531, eff.

1 1-1-98; 90-655, eff. 7-30-98; 91-45, eff. 6-30-99; 91-56,
2 eff. 6-30-99; 91-819, eff. 6-13-00.)

3 Section 90. The State Mandates Act is amended by adding
4 Section 8.25 as follows:

5 (30 ILCS 805/8.25 new)

6 Sec. 8.25. Exempt mandate. Notwithstanding Sections 6
7 and 8 of this Act, no reimbursement by the State is required
8 for the implementation of any mandate created by the Senior
9 Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption under Section
10 15-172 of the Property Tax Code.

11 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
12 becoming law.